

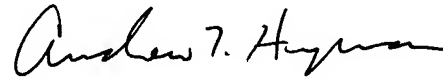
REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for a telephone interview with Applicant's representative on 6 February 2007. As discussed, it appears to Applicant that the *Hartman* reference is not valid prior art against the present invention, under 35 USC § 102(b) cited by the Examiner, because the *Hartman* publication did not describe the same invention more than one year prior to the effective date of the application (see MPEP 706.02).

The effective date of the present application was the international filing date of 8 May 2000 (see MPEP 1893.03b). This was not later than *Hartman's* publication date of 31 August 2000 (and was also not later than one year after *Hartman's* international filing date of 21 February 2000).

For these reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application covers allowable subject matter, and issuance thereof is earnestly requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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mbh
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